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"what advantage is there in reading it out of your Bible more than out of our own?" "Because," says the Reader, "in my Bible the verse sounds something like what Andy wants, though the sense is quite against him; but in his own Bible the sound is against him as well as the sense. Here it is:—'No prophecy of Scripture is made by any private interpretation.' The verse doesn't refer at all to the explaining of Scripture, but to the making of it. It means that the prophets didn't make the prophecies out of their own heads, but as they were taught by the Holy Spirit. The very next verse shows that this is the meaning of it. It says—'For prophecy came not by the will of man at any time; but holy men of God spoke inspired by the Holy Ghost.' And," says he, "instead of this passage being against me, it's for me. Just look at the verse before the one Andy read. St. Peter says to the people—'We have the more firm prophetic word *whereunto ye do well to attend* as to a light that shineth in a dark place.' There you see he tells them that even the prophecies, which are the most obscure parts of Scripture, could give them light and knowledge." "But look at the note in the Douay," says Andy; "it goes right against you." "It does," says the Reader, "and it goes right against the text, too. Just look at both together. The text says—'No prophecy of Scripture is made by private interpretation.' The note says—'This shows plainly that the Scriptures are not to be expounded by private interpretation.' The text speaks of making; the note speaks of expounding." "Besides," says Jerry, "if 'twas so plain, what need was there of the note to explain it. But," says he, "myself thinks it's more on the Protestant side than on ours." "That's the very reason," says Andy, "that the note was put there to show us that though it looks as if it was against us, it's in reality for us." "Troth," says Jerry, "it reminds me of Pat Murphy's sign-board. There was some kind of beast painted on it that Pat said was a lion; but others said 'twasn't a lion at all. So at length he sent for the painter, and made him write under the beast, 'Pat Murphy's lion.' 'Now,' says he, 'there can be no mistake about it.' And, in like manner, whenever a text looks as if 'twas a Protestant text, our Church writes under it, 'this is a Catholic text, though it doesn't look it.' " "But," says Andy, "I've other texts. Here's one:—'The lips of the priests shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth.'"^c Dr. Doyle tells us that this proves that it's the priests are to interpret Scripture, and that the likes of us aren't to be trying our private judgment on it."^d "Tell me," says the Reader, "were them Roman Catholic priests?" "Well," says Andy, "I allow they weren't. They were Jewish priests; but what holds good of one, holds good of the other." "Well," says the Reader, "that's more than ever I heard before. But tell me," says he, "what Bible did you read that verse out of?" "The Douay, of course," says Andy. "So I thought," says the Reader; "I suppose it came handiest to you. But listen to the way it's in my Bible:—'The priests' lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth.' " "What do I care," says Andy, "for your corrupt Bible? You put in the word 'should,' to imply that, perhaps, the priests' lips wouldn't keep knowledge. But," says he, "I'll hold to my own Bible, and it says plainly that they *shall* keep knowledge." "And did they?" says the Reader. "Of course they did," says Andy. "Well," says the Reader, "just read the next verse for us." "I don't want the next verse," says Andy. "But I want it," says the Reader, "and here it is. God says to these very priests—'You have departed out of the way; you have caused many to stumble at the law.' Now," says he, "did the priests' lips keep knowledge?" "Thunder and turf, Andy," says one of the boys, "what made you bring forward that verse, when the very next verse beats you?" "How could I know that?" says Andy. "Sure Dr. Doyle quotes the bit I quoted; and how did I know what came after it?" "It's an old saying," says the Reader, "that 'if the blind lead the blind both fall into the pit.'"^e That was the way with the Jews. They followed their priests blindly. They didn't examine for themselves, but took their religion upon trust; and sign's on, they rejected the Saviour. And," says he, "it's just the same way with yourselves. You give up your own judgment and follow your priests blindfold; but take care," says he, "that they don't lead you into the pit." "But," says Andy, "don't you Protestants care for what your ministers say?" "We do," says the Reader; "but, then, we don't take our religion morely upon their word, and they don't ask us to do it. They say, 'Open your Bibles and you'll see that what we teach you is true.' They appeal to us as reasonable beings, and they're not afraid to let us use our judgment on their teaching, for they try to teach nothing but what's in God's word. But your priests, on the contrary, order you to believe certain doctrines on their authority, and warn you not to try them by Scripture, or use your judgment on them, for if you do you'll surely turn heretics. Now, boys," says he, "which is it more likely that the Bible is on the side of the men who appeal to it, or the men who appeal from it?" "Why," says they, "it stands to reason that it must be on the side of the men who appeal to it." "But," says Andy, "Dr. Doyle gives us another text against private judgment, and here it is—'Ask the priests

the law.'"^f "What law?" says the Reader. "Why," says Andy, "I suppose about the meaning of Scripture." "Would you be so obliging as to read the next verse for us?" says the Reader. "I've nothing to say to the next verse," says Andy. "But I have," says the Reader, "and here it is—'Ask the priests the law, saying, if a man carry sanctified flesh in the skirt of his garment, and touch with his skirt bread, or portage, or wine, or oil, or any meat, shall it be sanctified?' Now," says the Reader, "what has that to say to reading the Bible or private judgment?" "Why, then, Andy Kelly," says one of the boys, "I wish there was a blister on your tongue when you brought forward them verses, for they've nothing to say to the point at all." "Tisn't my fault," says Andy; "I took them from Dr. Doyle, and sure he ought to know best." "It's right well he knew," says Jerry, "that the very next verses were against him, for he only quotes the little bit that looks to be on his side." "Well," says one of the boys, "that's a very unfair way of arguing. Sure it's only deluding us he is with his text." "He knew," says the Reader, "that you had no recourse to the Bible, or he wouldn't try to blind you in that way." "I see," says Andy, "that you've been made up on these points; you're too strong for me in the logic." "I thank God," says the Reader, "that I am made up on them, and that I am able to give a reason for the hope that is in me." But, says he, "tisn't my logic that's too strong for you; it's the word of God that's too strong for you. 'Tisn't human learning that I trust to; for, to tell you the truth, I think you'd be too cute for me in that; but it's the Word of God I trust to, and it's that Word that's too strong for you. But now," says he, "let me give you a few texts in favour of private judgment. St. Paul says to the Corinthians, 'I speak as to wise men, judge ye yourselves what I say.'"^g Now," says he, "isn't that an appeal to their judgment? He's reasoning against idolatry, and though an inspired apostle, he appeals to their own reason and judgment whether he's not arguing fairly. Then, again, he says to the Thessalonians, 'Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.'"^h If that isn't an appeal to their judgment, I don't know what is; it's the same thing as saying, 'Don't take any doctrines upon trust, examine them, use your judgment on them, prove them.' " "But how were they to prove them?" says Andy. "They were to go 'to the law and to the testimony,'"ⁱ says the Reader. "They were to compare them with the Word of God; they were to use their judgment to see whether they agreed with that rule, and if they did, they were to hold them fast. Again," says he, "we're told that when St. Paul preached to the Bereans, they didn't take all he told them upon trust, but 'daily searched the Scriptures whether these things were so.'"^j Now," says the Reader, "wasn't that using their private judgment?" "Yes," says Andy, "but their doing it doesn't prove that 'twas right to do it." "That's true enough," says the Reader, "but then the Evangelist allows that they did right. He gives them great praise, and says that they were more noble than those of Thessalonica. And tell me," says he, "which do you think reading the Bible and exercising their judgment on it did them good or harm?" "Harm I suppose," says Andy. "You're mistaken, then," says the Reader, "for we're told that by that means 'many of them believed; and I could bring forward lots of other texts if 'twas needful.' "You've brought enough," says Jerry, "for they're like the small praties, a deal of them is very filling." "But," says Andy, "I can answer the text about the Bereans." "Do so, then," says the boys. "Well," says he, "they weren't Christians; and Dr. Milner tells us that infidels and all who aren't Christians may read the Bible, and use their judgment on it." "By the hole in my coat," says Jerry, "that's too bad entirely; isn't it a hard case that infidels will be allowed to read the Word of God, and use their judgment on it, but that Christians won't. Troth," says he, "it's enough to make a man turn infidel." "Arrah, shut up your potato trap," says Andy, "and don't be making a Judy Malone of yourself. What does the likes of you know about it; there's the very pig (God bless her) laughing at you." "So she may," says Jerry; "but if any two-legged beast thinks to rise a laugh at me, faix I'll make him laugh at the wrong side of his mouth." "Stop your jaw," says Andy, "or by this and by that I'll kick you into the middle of next week." "Well," says the Reader, "that's a real Romish argument, but when a man comes to it it's a sure sign that he has got no other. I'll tell you," says he, "what happened the other day. A Roman Catholic dispenser met a man that has lately become a Protestant, and challenged him to give question about; so they went on for a while, but at last the Protestant asked the other a question that he couldn't answer at all; so he stopped for a while, and then gave him a look that was enough to scald him, and says he, 'You're a rascally turncoat; that was the only answer he could make. So the children took it up, and when the creatures are playing you'll hear one of the rogues asking another some question, and that one will put on a very wicked look, and he'll say, 'You're a rascally turncoat;'" and then the creatures will laugh until you'd

think they'd burst. It's always a sign," says the Reader, "that the argument is going against a man when he takes to threatening and abuse." "Well," says Andy, "I've one more question to put to you about private judgment. Will you deny that people often make a bad use of it, and fall into error by means of it?" "I won't deny it at all," says the Reader. "Well," says Andy, "isn't that a reason why we should have nothing to say to it?" "No," says the Reader, "the abuse of a thing is no argument against its use; there's not a blessing that God gives us but has been abused, but that's no reason why they shouldn't be used. There's the new potatoes," says he, "aren't they a great blessing to the country?" "They are," says Andy, "glory be to God for sending them." "And yet," says the Reader, "they sickened the whole family at Ned Bryan's; the creatures were so glad to get them that they ate too much; but," says he, "is that any reason why we should give up eating new potatoes?" "Well," says Andy, "I allow that it isn't." "In like manner," says the Reader, "the fact that some people make a bad use of private judgment, is no proof that the thing itself is bad, and no reason why we should give it up. But," says he, "after all our talk, I think it comes to the old point; the priests are against private judgment, because private judgment is against them." "Tell me," says he, "if using their judgment was likely to make men Romanists, do you think the priests would be against it?" "You may take your affidavit that they wouldn't," says Jerry, "and it's a hard case that when a man won't even buy a pig without using his judgment, he must take his religion without using any judgment at all." "Troth," says one of the boys, "when we take our religion that way upon trust, it's very like buying a pig in a bag; and myself thinks," says he, "that the pig can't be a sound one, or the owner wouldn't be afraid to let us use our judgment on it." "Take care, then, boys," says the Reader, "that some of you aren't buying a pig in a bag."—Your humble servant to command,

DAN CARTHY

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

SIR,—Saturday next, the 15th August, will be the festival of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven, and I think it would be acceptable to many others of your readers as well as to myself if you would give them some of the earliest extracts from the Fathers bearing upon the subject, whether in favour of or against this dogma of the Church of Rome. It appears to be a matter of some importance to know whether this festival is a very ancient one, or the contrary; and I hope you will be able to throw some satisfactory light upon it.

Your obedient servant,

SCRUTATOR.

If our correspondent will be good enough to refer to our third volume, p. 108, No. for September, 1854, he will find an article on the Assumption of the Virgin, which, we believe, has never yet been replied to, either in or out of our pages, and in which we showed that not one of the writings of the primitive Fathers contains the slightest hint that they believed or had ever heard of such a tradition. The earliest author in whose works the tradition is found is John Damascene, a monk of Jerusalem who flourished about the middle of the eighth century. We regret that the state of our columns prevents us from at present further noticing the subject, but we shall probably recur to it again in our next number.

FARMING OPERATIONS FOR AUGUST.

Oats being the hardest of all our cereal crops, takes least damage in bad weather; in fact, a shower is thought rather to improve the sample in colour; at the same time, it should not be neglected on this account, as is too often the case. It should be cut much earlier than is usual, particularly those sorts which are more liable to shed than others, such as the potato, and the black oats, which, weather permitting, should be cut while the grain is soft; like the wheat, it will fill and ripen in the sheaf and stook, and not be so liable to shed.

Barley, from its quickly vegetating power, is the grain of all others most liable to damage from a wet or damp harvest time, as it is particularly liable to grow both standing and in the sheaf; it should be on that account cut expeditiously in dry weather, bound and stooked when arrived at a sufficiently ripe state, which is indicated by the straw assuming a bright golden colour, from nearly the bottom to the top, and the ear bends down; a favourable opportunity should be seized to save this crop at this period, for as soon as the entire sap leaves the straw it gets peculiarly brittle under the ear, and the slightest wind "shakes the barley." At the same time, the grain should be allowed to get firmer than we have recommended for wheat. Barley is the spring grain crop most adapted for laying down land with clover and grass seeds, as it is not so liable to lodge as oats, and its foliage is not of so thick or smothering a nature; when this has been the case, it is necessary that the crop should be cut so high as to avoid the clover, which, being very succulent, cannot be dried in any reasonable time, and the barley is sure to suffer in quantity and quality; but when sown alone, it should be cut as close to the ground as possible.

^a Aggeus ii. 12.^b 1 Peter iii. 15.^c 1 Cor. x. 15.^d 1 Thess. v. 21.^e Isaiah viii. 20.^f Acts xvii. 11.^g Letter xii.^h This occurred a couple of months ago.ⁱ Mal. ii. 7.^j Abridgment of Christian Doctrine, 141.^k Matt. xv. 14.^l Abridgment of Christian Doctrine, 141.